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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the four 2001 issues of a quarterly newsletter for Illinois early childhood program directors, providing information on current issues in early childhood education. Regular features in each issue include: "The Director's Toolbox," delineating practical suggestions for directors related to program policies and staff issues; "The Accreditation Corner," detailing procedures for self-evaluation related to accreditation; "Family Friendly Practices," describing early childhood programs especially involved in meeting families' needs; and "Director's Profile," highlighting the accomplishments of early childhood education or care program directors in Illinois. Periodic features include updates on current training opportunities and grant availability, summaries of relevant research, and book reviews. The spring 2001 issue features a program director's game plan for leading a championship early childhood team. The summer 2001 issue highlights the status of the early childhood workforce in Illinois. The fall 2001 issue focuses on the role of the director in receiving new families at childcare programs. The winter 2001 issue provides information on tangible ways to show respect and appreciation to early childhood and childcare staff. (KB)

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The Director's Link
2001

Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University

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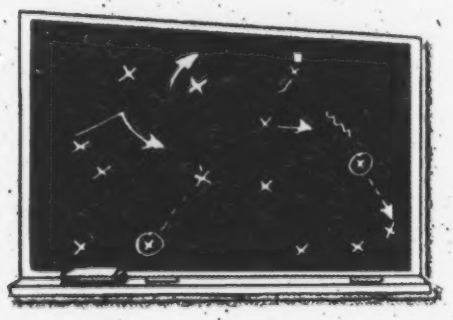
The Director's Link

Published by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University Spring 2001

A Director's Game Plan

by Pam Schiller



A good coach is able to see how each person's strength strengthens the team and is able to bring those skills and talents into consort. With this kind of leadership, the whole team benefits and each individual player is able to blossom to full potential.

A successful director is in many ways like a winning coach. Both encourage team members to work together. Both inspire people to do their best. Both are boosters of morale. A director who carefully selects a team and practices effective coaching skills will create a high quality environment for both children and staff.

You don't have to be in the playoffs or the World Series to have a winning team. You just have to play your best game every time you are on the field. How does this happen in child care? By creating a team with high morale; one that communicates well, works to improve performance, is dedicated to the organization, and has an unbridled passion to create a happy, secure, loving, and challenging environment for children. Here are ten strategies for leading a championship team:

Be a Good Scout

Building a winning team begins with the selection of the players. A good coach is a good scout. Looking for the right players for the right positions in the beginning will save time and energy in the long run. Directors who are good scouts look for team members who enjoy the company of children and have a deep commitment for making a difference in their lives. Most important, you want team members who believe they can make a difference. You want people who believe they are the best candidates for the job.

Finding the right players is only the first step in building a winning team. Placing them in the right positions is just as important. This can only happen if you really know each person as an individual — his/her hopes and dreams, special talents and skills, and needs and expectations. Only then will you be able to make the best match between a team member's capabilities and the available positions on your team.

Let Orientation Be Your Warm Up

Plan orientation for newcomers that allows them to know exactly what your expectations are. Provide copies of rules and personnel policies and discuss and give examples of each. Review your center's organizational structure, probationary periods, preferred methods of communication, guidelines about the use of space, and policies regarding promotion.

Your goal is to coach new team members to be the best they can be in their new roles. This process can't be rushed. It takes time to provide concrete and meaningful feedback on progress and allow time for self-assessment.

Offer a Training Camp

Make staff training for your whole team a regular routine. Initial training helps a new team member get off on the right foot, while continual training keeps everyone on the right foot and also builds camaraderie.

Consider assigning a mentor to each new team member. This is one of the best ways to boost a novice's confidence and understanding of expectations. It allows the novice to walk in the footsteps of someone doing the job well. Be sure to think of ways to reward your mentors. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that just being selected to serve as a mentor is reward enough.

Make training accessible and fun. You want to keep staff inspired with new ideas and motivated toward constant improvement. When you plan in-house training, be sure to draw on the talents of existing staff.

Continued on page 2

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Continued from front page

Get Your Signals Straight

A competent coach constantly thinks of ways to improve communication because clear communication means that everyone stays on track. It is also at the heart of team member and fan morale. You need clear, direct, two-way communication between you and the team, and among the individual team members and the families they serve.

Involve the team in center-wide communication whenever possible. A staff or parent newsletter can be more than an administrative memo from the director. It can include contributions from staff or parents.

Provide your team members with appropriate support for communicating effectively with parents. Anticipate and practice common scenarios so that everyone knows automatically what to do when challenging situations occur. For example, give staff members a playbook that provides suggested scripted responses for what to say to a parent who is concerned about a biter in their child's classroom or a parent who expresses concern about the length of naptime.

Use a Visible Scoreboard

Good coaches recognize individual staff members through daily activities and in program planning. Visit each classroom when you arrive in the morning and greet each staff member by name. Highlight each team member's personal and professional accomplishments in staff memos, parent newsletters, or bulletin board displays. To emphasize the individual's importance to the team effort, display a *Who's Who on the Team* photo gallery for all to see.

Consult the Team

Actively solicit input from your team. Involve staff in the decision-making processes of the center. When money is available for equipment or supplies, ask for staff input on how to spend it. As much as possible, involve staff in setting center-wide policies, particularly those policies that directly impact them. This kind of staff involvement not only improves the caring environment but also contributes to a "we" feeling in the center.

Stay Focused

A good coach watches the team no matter what other stress is around. It is the coach's job to remove a tired player, see a nervous pitcher, and watch for frustration. The coach does this even though the general manager is making demands, the score is behind, the fans are asking for autographs, or a team member is injured. Sometimes, employees get frustrated, isolated, and overwhelmed. It is the director's role to recognize these situations and intercede before they become insurmountable or threatening to the health of the team.

Remember the 7th Inning Stretch

Breaks are essential for managing stress and for allowing adults the opportunity to communicate with other adults. Staff members need a quiet and comfortable place to relax and refuel. Providing for a few minutes away will help them return to the classroom more patient and loving. Also, recognize the social needs of your team. Plan for social occasions in recognition of birthdays, holidays, and other special events.

Be A Model

Some centers have established core values — a code by which to live and work. Core values provide clear objectives and focus for all employees. They also send a strong message to parents and the community about the center's goals. Core values communicate the expected behaviors of everyone on a winning team. Be a model of the behavior you expect from the team. You must be willing to do anything you ask your staff to do.

Create Raving Fans

One of the most visible signs of a winning team is loyal and dedicated fans. Who are your fans? Your ultimate goal is to have children who are eager to come to school in the morning and families who enthusiastically recommend your center to their friends and neighbors. The best way for you to create those raving fans is to build and coach a winning team. Team members will blossom with the support of raving fans, and so will the coach.

Pam Schiller, Ph.D., is a national early childhood consultant. This article was reprinted with permission from the July 2000 issue of Child Care Information Exchange, 800-221-2864.

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"Effective leaders use the tools of community-building to create an environment in which many leaders can emerge."

Gifford Pinchot in ***The Leader of the Future***

The Director's Toolbox

Staffing Budget Not Adding Up?

The single largest expense category for any child care program is the budget needed to retain a stable professional staff. At some centers, staffing budgets can amount to more than 75% of total dollars required to run the operation. After all, the "product" of quality care is essentially the staff that delivers it.

Take a Closer Look at the Numbers

Because staffing expenditures are the majority of a program's operating costs, even the slightest efforts to increase the effectiveness of planning and controls can make a measurable difference. Consider these guidelines and crunch the numbers more accurately.

☑ Be a student of history

Study past staffing trends and keep track of what really happened. Are you scheduling an employee to work 30 hours each week, but then adding a staff meeting, training session, or after-hours family event? Compare the time actually worked with the projected work schedule over a long period of time to get a clearer sense of exactly how many hours are being logged. Then update your payroll projections accordingly.

☑ Use a "sum-of-the-parts" frame of reference

Rather than think of the staff as a single entity, consider the unique role each employee plays at your center. For example, staff who close the center each day are more likely to log more than the assigned work hours if they have other responsibilities like waiting for late-arriving parents or securing the facility, while others are likely to leave precisely at their assigned quitting time if their shifts end during the middle of day. By assembling a staffing budget that accounts for distinctions like these, the projected total is much more likely to forecast reality come payday.

☑ Plan for substitute staff

Often, when regular staff take vacation or are away on sick leave, it may be necessary to call in temporary substitute help. If the regular employee's time away is a paid leave, the actual payroll cost will be greater since you will be compensating both the regular and substitute staff. In other cases, perhaps when an administrative assistant is away, the workload may be re-distributed among those on site. Similarly, when the director has a day off, the assistant director's duties may be revised to cover the absence without calling in a substitute.

☑ Use accurate planning numbers

The more precise your planning figures, the more accurate your budget projections will be. Remember when you plan monthly payroll, to multiply weekly payroll projections by 4.33 (rather than rounding to 4) to arrive at the amount needed. Also be aware of the payroll cycle: if your center pays semi-monthly, there will be 24 paydays annually. If the rotation is bi-weekly, paydays happen 26 times a year.

☑ Look for cash inflows

What are the ways that funds actually *flow into* your staffing budget? For instance, do employees at your center participate in the cost of their medical insurance coverage? If so, remember to credit your staffing budget by the amounts staff pay for the premiums. Also check with your business consultant to see if any fringe benefits you offer can be treated on a "Section 125" basis. These pre-tax benefits not only stretch your staffing budget, they also boost team morale by leaving more take-home pay for your staff.

☑ Watch for landmarks

One quick way to stay on top of your staffing budget is to know precisely how much is budgeted for each payday and monitoring your success in staying at or below the budgeted amount. This tactic is especially helpful if paydays are scheduled on a bi-weekly basis. Knowing how much is required to meet each payroll will prevent the sudden surprise of a third payday for two of the months each fiscal year.

Planning Ahead

NLU Courses for Directors

Summer Term begins June 25

On-Campus Course

ECE515
Financial & Legal Aspects of Child Care Management (3 s.h.)

ECE515 will be offered this summer at the NLU Wheeling campus July 26-28, and again on August 9-11, 2001. NLU faculty members Doug Clark and Teri Talan will serve as core instructors for the course.

ECE515 examines the financial and legal issues pertinent to establishing and operating child care and family service programs. Completion of ECE515 is applicable to the core competency requirements for the Illinois Director Credential.

Online Courses

ECE512
Early Childhood Curriculum (2 s.h.)

ECE582G
Writing & Editing for Effective Communication (1 s.h.)

For more information about NLU degree programs for directors, contact Doug Clark at dclark@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7711

Professional Development Opportunities

August 17-18, and October 26-27, 2001
Summer Management Institute: School-Age Child Care

The summer management institute will address key issues relating to the administration of school-age programs including ASQ accreditation, NSACA standards, legal considerations, developing homework centers, and implementing the *Adventures in Peacemaking* curriculum. A follow-up session will take place October 26-27, 2001. This four-day training event is co-sponsored by the Day Care Action Council of Illinois and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time.

Space is limited to 30 participants. Priority will be given to applicants from programs enrolling families employed by member companies of the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependant Care.

Friday & Saturday, August 17-18
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
Wheeling Campus Annex

Registration fee: $199 *(includes four days of training, all course materials, and food)*

Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE582D) by paying an additional $418 and participating in an additional half-day follow-up session.

September 28-29, 2001
Fall Management Institute: Taking on Turnover

This training event is conducted in collaboration with the Center for the Child Care Workforce and will address issues about managing staff turnover in early childhood programs. Topics include: understanding how turnover affects children, parents, and staff; calculating the cost of staff turnover; reducing turnover by improving the work environment; recruitment and hiring practices; innovative compensation strategies; and joining with others to take action on turnover.

Friday & Saturday, September 28-29
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
Wheeling Campus Annex

Registration fee: $150 *(includes all course materials and food)*

Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE536) by paying an additional $418 and participating in a follow-up retreat.

For more information about these training opportunities, contact Eileen Eisenberg, at eeisenberg@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7703

Grant$ Update

Center For Early Childhood Leadership Awarded Grant For Director Training

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership has been named by Work/Family Directions (WFD) as a recipient of an ABC Legacy grant. The $35,000 award will underwrite a series of training workshops throughout 2001. Two staff development workshops were held in March, one featuring the *Adventures in Peacemaking* curriculum, and another offering training for directors of infant/toddler care programs. A summer management institute scheduled for August will focus on school-age child care program administration. In October, another staff development workshop will provide training on the Preschool Discovery Science curriculum.

Work/Family Directions (WFD) made the grant on behalf of the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care. ABC member companies are Aetna, Allstate, American Express, AT&T, Chevron, Citigroup, DeLoitte & Touche, Eastman Kodak, ExxonMobil, GE Capital Services, IBM, Johnson & Johnson, Lucent Technologies, Novartis, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Prudential, Texaco, Texas Instruments and Xerox.

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The Accreditation Corner

Use Simple Questions to Guide Decisions About DAP

In recent years, the early childhood field has focused less on specific do's and don'ts of developmentally appropriate practice and more on the teacher as decision maker. *What's appropriate and effective for this group of children, in this community, at this time?* Answers to this question can never be dictated from above but must be constructed every day by those who know the children best.

Here are some other simple questions that may help guide teachers and program directors in making decisions about what is appropriate.

- **Are children welcomed?**
  Does the program extend a welcome to every child and every family? Is that welcome visible and audible in the voices of staff, in the images in the classroom, in the homey details of how children are cared for?
- **Are children respected?**
  How do staff talk with children? Are children treated like human beings with individual preferences and personalities? Does the program value and build on children's cultures, languages, and families?
- **Are children engaged?**
  Is it evident that children are actively involved in worthwhile activities? Are they able — considering age and individual ability — to sustain this involvement over time?
- **Are children challenged?**
  Children love a challenge. Are they challenged to tackle important tasks? Is the classroom a place where children can find just the right level of challenge, which will be different for different children?
- **Are children supported?**
  Children won't take risks without a safety net. Do the adults in the program act as supportive guides? Do they use a wide array of teaching strategies — letting children explore, directly instructing them in skills, providing hints and encouragement — depending on the child and the situation?
- **Are children learning?**
  What growth do you see in children's understandings, skills, and dispositions in all areas of development? Is their learning educationally valuable and culturally relevant? Will this learning serve children well in building their future academic and socio-emotional competence?

Several resources are available to help programs consider what developmentally appropriate practice means for the children and families they serve. An annotated listing of resources is provided in NAEYC's *Resources for Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Recommendations from the Profession* (2000), edited by Gail Perry and Mary S. Duru ($10).

This excerpt was reprinted from Accreditation Update (vol. 2, no. 1, Winter 2000), a publication of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Family Friendly Practices

Kid's Kingdom

Oblong, Illinois is situated an hour's drive southeast of Effingham, about 15 miles from the Indiana state line in downstate Crawford County. Once an economic boomtown during the oil discovery days of the early 1900's, today Oblong is a community of local merchants, bed and breakfast inns, and 1,700 citizens. Comparably speaking, Oblong is a tiny town, yet the 800 families who make there home there are able to celebrate special opportunities that are seldom available to residents of larger cities. This community is closely connected, and collaborative ventures among her stakeholders really make a difference.

One local success story involves Kid's Kingdom, an early learning and care center. In recent years, the program has been expanded from a half-day preschool to provide full-day services for infants, toddlers, and preprimary age children. A school-age care program has also been established. Rhonda Clark is owner and director. She has taken additional steps to reach out.

In Oblong, one grade school serves the entire town, and the school's three kindergarten classrooms are sufficient to accommodate each new class of students. Rhonda has established a powerful professional relationship among the preschool teachers at Kid's Kingdom and the local corps of public school kindergarten teachers. Routinely, the teachers from both schools convene to share ideas about teaching strategies and learning goals for children. Parents are also invited into the collaboration. As a result of wide-open communication, the families of children transitioning from Kid's Kingdom into kindergarten enjoy a smooth entry into their new school. Equally grateful are the kindergarten teachers. According to Rhonda, "Everybody gets off to a great start!"

Rhonda attributes the growing success of Kid's Kingdom to her commitment to program quality, especially the investment she is making in her teaching staff and their ongoing professional development. The citizens of Oblong are noticing. Affirmation comes from families being served, and from the increasing number of inquiries by new families hoping to join. "There's nothing more rewarding than answering the phone to hear the caller say, *"I just heard what a great center you have!"* says Rhonda, "parents are our best advertisement!"

Director's Profile

Azieb Gebrehiiwet Blending Executive Experience with a Caring Spirit

It was the quest for academic excellence that drew Azieb Gebrehiiwet and her husband to the United States from the nation of Eritrea more than three decades ago. "We were hungry for knowledge," she recalls of the young couple's ambition to earn university degrees and then return to their homeland by the Red Sea in eastern Africa. After completing college in 1974, their plans to return were curtailed by the border war between Eritrea and Ethiopia that had grown fierce, placing in doubt the safety of anyone entering the region from a non-Communist country. Deciding to stay in Chicago, Azieb found work at a bank and steadily climbed the ladder of corporate success.

After nearly 20 years of executive experience, Azieb was well aware of what it would take to establish a successful enterprise when she launched Eyes on the Future, Inc. in 1994. She knew it demanded total commitment. Emptying her retirement nest egg and family savings, she was able to acquire a building that once housed a school in Chicago's Rogers Park neighborhood. While it was being refurbished, she studied child development to acquire the college training needed to be the center director.

Azieb relied on the sharp business acumen she had honed as a bank operations chief to guide decision making about the Eyes on the Future venture. "Early on in my career, I learned not to be penny-wise and dollar-foolish," she said. Although Azieb was properly credentialed to lead every aspect of the center's operation, she also recognized the potential return of a solid investment in program and staff leadership. She invited Jennette Brown, a degreed early childhood educator and veteran prekindergarten teacher to oversee staffing and develop learning programs, and together this owner-director tandem has formed a remarkable team.

Eyes on the Future is on a fast track in active pursuit of NAEYC accreditation and filled to its enrollment capacity, but the startup days were different. "The first three years were a struggle," recalls Azieb. "I had to learn about the true needs of the community. I didn't really understand child care needs for low-income families or homeless families or single parents." It took time and careful analysis to identify just how Eyes on the Future could best serve its clientele. For example, when Azieb concluded that a nearby park district program could provide school-age care more efficiently, she transformed her school-age space into quarters for infant and toddler care. Now over 25% of the 96 children in the center are under the age of two, and a waiting list continues to grow. Families have also been gratified by efforts to establish a clothing pantry and after-hours family networking events.

Azieb's and Jennette's passion for serving people has fostered an "extended family" atmosphere at Eyes on the Future, and that spirit has unified the 18-member staff. One of the ways the staff stays connected is to convene weekly over lunch served family-style. "We cook everything ourselves," boasts Azieb. "It's so wonderful to enjoy the smell of the food while it's cooking and then to share the meal together." Under Jeanette's guidance, the teachers have teamed together to implement a center-wide literacy project that will be showcased at the inaugural Leadership Connections event in May.

The field of early childhood education is enriched by the depth of expertise and the breadth of experiences possessed by its practitioner-leaders. While tales of child center administrators with previous careers in private practice, public service, or small business management are not so uncommon, Azieb's story is one-of-a-kind.

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The Status of the Early Childhood Workforce in Illinois

While there seems to be growing public awareness about the critical role adults play in the provision of high quality early care and education programs, that awareness has not translated into an increase in professional recognition by way of higher compensation, better working conditions, or greater occupational status for the early childhood workforce. This is the central message of a new report released by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership. *Who's Caring for the Kids?* paints a picture of a career development system that is seriously under-funded and lacking a coherent and articulated framework. The key findings of the report were presented to policymakers, corporate leaders, and teacher educators at a breakfast event held at National-Louis University's Chicago campus on June 20, 2001.

Commissioned by the McCormick Tribune Foundation, *Who's Caring for the Kids?* provides the most comprehensive analysis to date of the staffing of the state's public and private early childhood programs. The study, conducted in partnership with the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA), combines statistical data from the Center, INCCRRA, IDHS, ISBE and approximately 18 other state and national reports. In addition to tapping existing data sources, three statewide surveys were conducted to gather information regarding compensation and turnover, preferred nomenclature, and practitioners' career decisions.

A Picture of Contrasts

One of the key findings of *Who's Caring for the Kids?* relates to the disparities in qualifications and compensation for individuals with similar job titles and responsibilities. In Illinois, two individuals may have vastly different requisite qualifications depending on the regulatory oversight of their program. For example, a preschool teacher working in a DCFS-licensed program is required to have only two years of college including six semester hours of coursework in early childhood education or child development. This contrasts sharply with a teacher in an ISBE state-funded Pre-K program who is required to have a bachelor's degree and teacher certification.

What this means is that four-year-olds in Illinois do not have equal access to highly trained teachers. In fact, less than 20% of the preschool-aged children in center- or school-based settings have teachers who are required to have a bachelor's degree and a teaching credential.

Compensation levels for early childhood practitioners also contrast sharply depending on the funding source of the program. State-funded Pre-K programs and federally funded Head Start programs are able to pay their staff better wages and provide better benefits than programs funded exclusively by parent fees and/or IDHS child care subsidies. For example, a prekindergarten teacher with a bachelor's degree and teaching credential working for a community-based program earns on average 47% less than a teacher with the same credentials working in a Pre-K program housed in a public school.

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In general, wages for all early childhood practitioners are well below those paid in other sectors of the labor force. A teacher with several years of experience and two years of college working in a community-based program funded predominantly by parent fees makes $9.76 per hour or $20,300 a year. This is far less than a postal clerk with a high school diploma who earns on average $17.72 per hour ($36,855 a year) and receives generous benefits.

Program Leadership

The report describes the critical role that directors play in the provision of quality services. It contrasts directors' job responsibilities, requisite qualifications, and compensation with that of elementary school principals. On average, directors of center-based programs in Illinois make $35,266 on a 12-month contract. Elementary school principals in 2000 averaged over $77,529 year on a 10-month contract. Salaries and benefits of directors vary widely depending on the funding and regulatory auspices of the program.

Barbara Bowman, Adele Simmons, and Jerry Stermer.

The Impact of Accreditation

Who's Caring for the Kids? also looked at the impact of accreditation on the stability of the early childhood workforce. The good news is that turnover for assistant teachers in accredited programs is 13% lower than in nonaccredited programs; turnover for teachers is 8% lower. Accredited programs also pay teachers better wages, have directors with higher levels of education, and have a more positive organizational climate than nonaccredited programs. The bad news is that less than 10% of programs in Illinois (about 400 out of 5,000 centers) have achieved accreditation.

Obstacles to Career Development

While there is a great deal happening in Illinois in the area of professional development, there are clearly gaps in access to

Steve BeMiller

training for practitioners who live in certain geographic regions of the state. The report concludes that Illinois lacks a coherent system of initial preparation, ongoing professional development, and career counseling for early childhood practitioners.

Each year, approximately 700 students graduate from the state's community colleges with an early childhood associate's degree, and another 700 receive a bachelor's or advanced degree in early childhood education. The number of graduates, though, is insufficient to keep up with the demand. In particular, there is a severe shortage of practitioners with specialized training in infant/toddler and school-age care.

The researchers also found that many practitioners receive little guidance about career planning or how to access different training opportunities. Furthermore, many individuals seeking to build on their associate's degrees face obstacles when transferring coursework taken at the community college to four-year institutions of higher education.

Slipping Through the Cracks

In Illinois, many caregivers operate outside the established early childhood regulatory system and thus do not have access to technical assistance or professional training. Half of the 660,000 children in nonparental care in Illinois are served in informal settings where there are no staff qualifications or minimum standards for health and safety. Seventy percent of all infants and toddlers in nonparental care are in unlicensed settings.

A Non-System

Who's Caring for the Kids? presents the disturbing conclusion that the early childhood career development system in Illinois is really more of a *non-system*, lacking structure, vision, coherence, and sufficient funding. The ramifications of this non-system are real, both in terms of the lost talent of dedicated workers who leave the field feeling unappreciated, and in terms of lost opportunities for children.

To order a copy of the full report ($12, plus $4 shipping), contact the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, 800-443-5522, ext. 7711.

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The Director's Toolbox

Tips for Making Effective Presentations

If you want to win over the hearts of early childhood educators during a workshop, you'd better include handouts. There is something about trekking home a packet of handouts that serves as a powerful symbol of professional growth and development. Early childhood folks love them.

Creating and assembling handouts

In the world of public relations, it goes without saying that packaging is everything. The same marketing principles apply to the packet of handouts you create for your workshop. The appearance of your handouts is a direct reflection of your professionalism. Make sure they project the image you want. Here are a few tips to consider:

Strive for consistency in the appearance. Use the same typeface and font size throughout. Put a heading on each page. It can be in caps or upper and lower case, but use the same style on all pages. Orient the text on pages similarly – either vertically (portrait orientation) or horizontally (landscape orientation) – to prevent participants from having to turn their handouts in different directions to read.

Create a distinctive trademark. Create a personal logo, emblem, or graphic that you can add to your handouts to be a distinctive trademark for your materials. This need not be something costly or fancy; even a unique border can be your personal signature statement.

Proofread, proofread, and proofread. And when you are done, proofread one more time. Make sure there are no typographic errors anywhere in your handouts.

Number the bottom of each page. Assemble the pages in your packet in the order in which you will be using the handouts, and number consecutively. During the session you can refer to the page numbers to help people follow along. Add extra note-taking pages at the end of your packet.

Use color paper to create a special effect. Add variety and increase interest by putting your handouts on light color paper. Cream, buff, beige, light green, grey, sky blue, or any of the natural earth tones are good shades to choose from. Avoid fluorescent or bold colors. They tire the eyes. Consider color coding different sections of your handout packet. This adds cost, but it facilitates referencing subtopics.

Create a customized cover. Print your cover on color card stock and include a graphic that relates to your topic. Include your name, title, contact information, and the date and location of your presentation.

Bind your packet. Although it increases the cost of production, binding your handouts gives them a professional appearance. Consider cloth tape binding or plastic spiral binding. Alternatively, you can staple the pages together in the top left-hand corner or three-hole punch the pages so participants can insert them into a binder. Don't just leave pages loose unless you have only a few handouts.

Make sure copies are smudge free. Check the first set of handouts that comes out of the photocopy machine to make sure they do not have stray marks or smudges. If you are making a photocopy of a journal or magazine article, track down the original. Do not make a copy of a copy of a copy.

Pay careful attention to copyright issues. If you want to use something from a copyrighted source, be sure to contact the author or copyright holder and get permission to reproduce and distribute it at your workshop. When you have acquired permission to reprint, indicate the original source on the bottom of your handout along with any special notation required by the copyright holder. If you have modified or adapted from another source, indicate this on the bottom of your handout.

From: Bloom, P. J. (2000). Workshop Essentials: Planning and Presenting Dynamic Workshops. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons. Reprinted with permission.

Planning Ahead

NLU Courses for Directors

Fall Term begins September 10

On-Campus Courses

ECE510 (3 s.h.)
Child, Family and Community
Chicago Campus

ECE512 (2 s.h.)
Early Childhood Curriculum
Wheeling Campus

Online Courses

ESR506 (2 s.h.)
Graduate Research:
Interpretive/Critical

ECE515 (3 s.h.)
Financial and Legal Aspects of
Childcare Administration

ECE593 (2 s.h.)
Seminar:
Early Childhood Education

For more information about the ECA degree program contact Doug Clark at dclark@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7711

Professional Development Opportunities

September 28-29, 2001

Fall Management Institute:
Taking on Turnover

This training event is conducted in collaboration with the Center for the Child Care Workforce (CCW) and will address issues about managing staff turnover in early childhood programs. Topics will include: understanding how turnover affects children, parents, and staff; calculating the cost of staff turnover; reducing turnover by improving the work environment; recruitment and hiring practices; innovative compensation strategies; and joining with others to take action on turnover.

Friday, September 28
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 29
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National-Louis University
Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: $150 includes all texts, handouts, continental breakfast, and lunch.

Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE536) by paying an additional $448 and participating in a follow-up session.

October 18-20, 2001

Follow-up Sessions in 2002
The Next Step

The Next Step is an advanced leadership training program designed for seasoned professionals. The training focuses on building coaching and mentoring skills, increasing cross-culture sensitivity, enhancing presentation skills, and preparing participants to become Illinois Director Credential professional growth advisors and NAEYC accreditation mentors.

Space is limited to 20 participants. Experienced directors of NAEYC-accredited centers, college instructors, supervisors of multi-site programs, consultants, and early childhood leaders are encouraged to apply. Application deadline is August 1, 2001

Fee: $350 includes housing, food, and materials

Participants may earn 4 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE545 and ECE546) by paying an additional $896.

For more information about these training opportunities, contact Eileen Eisenberg at eeisenberg@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7703

Directors' Technology Training to be Offered in Three Locations in Illinois

The popular Directors' Technology Training course will be offered in three locations across Illinois in 2001 and 2002. Beginning its third season this fall with an offering at NLU's Wheeling Campus, trainings will also be offered in Elgin and in the Carbondale area early next year.

Made possible by funding from IDHS, the goal of Directors' Technology Training is to improve the computer skills of directors and increase their access to management resources through the Internet. Directors will become familiar with a common set of tools and templates to manage their early childhood programs more effectively using Microsoft Office. They will learn basic fundamentals of computer hardware, operating systems, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, database management, and the Internet.

Each seven-day training is limited to 12 participants and priority is given to directors whose programs serve IDHS-funded children. For more information about this training opportunity, contact Eileen Eisenberg at eeisenberg@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7703

Fall 2001
October 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 24
NLU Wheeling Campus

Winter 2002
January 21, 23, 28, 30, February 4, 6, 11
NLU Elgin Campus

Spring 2002
March 26, 27, April 2, 3, 4, 9, 10
John A. Logan College, Carterville

Fee: $50 includes all materials.

Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE534) by paying an additional $448.

The Accreditation Corner

Staff Qualifications: The Cornerstone of High-Quality Programming

Over the past two decades, a number of research studies have investigated the relationship between teachers' level of formal education and specialized training in early childhood education and various developmental outcomes for children. The conclusion of these studies is unequivocal – formally trained staff are better equipped to recognize and meet the developmental and learning needs of children and families.

Within the NAEYC Self-Study Administrator Report, the criterion relating to staff qualifications states, ***high-quality early childhood programs are staffed by adults who understand child and family development.*** The Report includes several statements relating to minimum levels of education and training for teachers, program leaders, and support staff. These statements can serve as a guide for directors, owners, and members of governing boards who seek to improve the quality of their centers' service to children and families.

- Early childhood teachers have at least a CDA Credential or an associate degree in early childhood education, child development, or equivalent. Preferably, teachers have baccalaureate degrees in early childhood or child development.
- The administrator has expertise (acquired through formal education and experience) in early childhood education and administration such as human resource and financial management.
- In programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and/or kindergartners, an individual with at least a baccalaureate degree in early childhood education or child development is employed to direct the educational program. This person may be the director or another person, such as education coordinator, curriculum specialist, or assistant director.
- In public schools, the individual who provides support to prekindergarten and kindergarten teachers and/or who is responsible for program development is a qualified early childhood specialist.
- In programs serving only school-age children, the educational program is directed by a school-age specialist with a baccalaureate degree in elementary education, recreation, or related field, and at least three years of experience working with school-age children.
- The program provides regular opportunities for staff to participate in ongoing professional development to improve skills in working with children and families or to prepare them to assume more responsible positions.
- The amount and kind of continuing education provided will vary depending on the needs of the program, the pre-service qualifications of staff, and the number of staff pursing higher education.
- Professional development experiences should be credit-bearing whenever possible.

Family Friendly Practices

Albany Park East Community Center

Located on Chicago's northwest side, the Albany Park East Community Center serves a widely diverse clientele. "We're becoming known as a port-of-entry for families from other countries who are new to Chicago," says Dina Evans, Director of the early childhood program that serves 179 children. In addition to early learning and care, Albany Park offers a complete menu of community outreach services, from a food pantry and workforce development initiative to training in English as a second language and GED completion. The center at Albany Park is a participant in the Chicago Accreditation Partnership.

This past May, the teachers and children at the Albany Park Head Start and state Pre-K program collaborated to celebrate Mother's Day at an evening event held in the center's gym. "Because we are so diverse," said Dina, "our special night was the perfect opportunity to bring all our families together to celebrate something we all shared in common...our mothers."

By everyone's account, the evening was a great success as over a hundred moms attended with their children. The meal was served by the Albany Park staff and the children from the seven classrooms prepared homemade desserts. The children also created decorations for the occasion. To top it off, they honored their mothers with a short musical performance.

Besides its obvious success as a family outreach activity, the Mother's Day celebration also served as an effective staff development experience. According to Dina, the idea for the project came from one of the classroom teachers. "It was rewarding to observe our staff share ownership of the idea and to support them in planning the event," she said. "Our staff really grew together because everyone had some kind of hands-on involvement in the project. Along with the great food and fun, there were lots of smiles and laughter...we can't wait to do it again!"

Director's Profile

Sara Starbuck A Role Model for Lifelong Learning

Sara Starbuck is Director of the Child Development Laboratories at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. In her dual role as program administrator and member of the college faculty, she supervises the practical training component of pre-service teachers seeking degrees in early childhood education. "Believe it or not, we have more adult students than children in our program!" says Sara referring to the 70 university students in her care.

Having graduated from SIU with both bachelor's and master's degrees in early childhood education, Sara is right at home in her current role. But in the time between her days as a student at SIU and her return as a staff member nine years ago, Sara's professional journey has taken her far.

She has worked as a teacher, a center director, a social services consultant and a teacher educator. She has served in virtually every early care and education venue: in a university campus preschool that served the children of college students, at a church-sponsored site that provided infant and toddler care, and in a program in New Mexico that served special needs children living on an Indian reservation.

In 1981, following the tornado that struck Marion, Illinois, Sara was appointed Preschool Consultant to the Disaster Relief Project. She later joined the staff of John A. Logan College in her hometown of Carterville where she served as Lab Supervisor for the campus child care center before her move to SIU.

Sara is past-president of the Southern Illinois AEYC and is co-chair of the association's annual conference slated for September this year. She is also a member of the Illinois Director Credential Commission and an IDC Professional Growth Advisor. As an advocate for the ongoing professional development of early childhood educators, Sara points out the challenges that confront teachers and directors in the southern region of Illinois. "Because we're spread so far apart, our access to training is reduced," she said, "It's really hard to get everyone involved."

Sara recently completed *The Next Step* advanced leadership training and is continuing her post-graduate studies in Early Childhood Administration at National-Louis University. As a participant in Cohort #6 of *Taking Charge of Change*, she credits the experience as life-changing. "The training made me look at my management style and practices. It gave me the tools to really implement positive changes at my center."

Sara's connection with *Taking Charge of Change* didn't end at the culmination of Cohort #6 two years ago. Since then, she has served as a *TCC* mentor, advising recent participants as they develop and implement program improvement initiatives at their programs in downstate Illinois. At her own center at SIU, Sara continues to apply the knowledge and skills she acquired through *Taking Charge of Change*. "As long as I'm here," she says, "I will continue to implement changes that positively impact our program."

If history is any indication, Sara Starbuck will continue to accept new challenges that will add to her portfolio of professional accomplishments. Perhaps she will complete an advanced academic program, or serve the field of early childhood education in new leadership capacities. And no matter where her professional journey takes her, it's also a good bet that Sara will be where learning is taking place. In her words, "I'll always see myself as a teacher."

"Sometimes leaders are born when one in the crowd steps forward to try."

William J. Bennett

Speaking Out

If you are interested in becoming an advocate to increase public awareness about early childhood workforce issues, the Center for Early Childhood Leadership has assembled a *Who's Caring for the Kids?* advocacy packet to assist you in your efforts. The packet includes one copy of the full report, five copies of the executive summary, a CD ROM PowerPoint presentation summarizing the key findings of the report, a video of the *Who's Caring for the Kids?* launch event, and guidelines for using the report with different audiences (e.g., policymakers, board members, college students, civic leaders). The cost of the advocacy packet is $99. Call 800-443-5522, ext. 7711 for further information.

The Director's Link

Published by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University **Fall 2001**

Company's Coming

By Donna Rafanello

We all have fond memories of arriving at a friend's house for an evening of good food and friendly conversation. As guests, we had certain expectations about the way we would be treated and the schedule of events for the evening. Usually there were special touches that our hosts had added that helped us to feel welcome in their home. A high-quality child care program contains many of the same elements as a good party. From fulfilling your role as host or hostess to creating the right ambiance and facilitating introductions, the situations are analogous.

It goes without saying that the director plays a critical role in receiving new families into the center. The director sets the tone for everything that follows. Families' first impressions of a center can be very powerful, and you want them to be good ones. What follows are suggestions for welcoming families into your program. While the director plays a key role in facilitating families' transition into the program, staff should be integrally involved in developing family-friendly policies and implementing these on a daily basis.

Extending the Invitation

Communicating the mission of your program to prospective parents is the first step to projecting a positive image. Below are several questions to spark your thinking on the messages you communicate to parents about the program you operate and the role they will play in your center.

- Does your program brochure extend a message of welcome?
- Does your office staff handle incoming calls in a manner that communicates that families are important?
- Do you encourage families to bring their children on their first visit to the center?
- Do you schedule families' visits to your program at times when teachers are available to talk with them?
- Does your program literature celebrate the uniqueness of each family?
- When new families visit your program, do you greet them at the door with a warm smile and a friendly "Welcome?"
- Does the dress code at your center convey to parents that you and your staff are professionals?
- Does your courteous behavior and language tell parents that you conduct the business of your center in a professional manner?
- Do you help parents make an informed decision about what is best for their child?

Every effort you make to reassure parents that you will provide them with the information they need to make the right decision for their family will be greatly appreciated.

Continued on page 2

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Creating the Environment

Take some time to assess your center environment for child- and family-friendly elements. Try to identify places in the center where, among other things, children and families can nurture relationships. In a similar way, directors and teachers should examine their environment from a family-friendly perspective.

Adopting a family-friendly attitude requires a keen awareness of the things you are doing right now, and a willingness to identify those areas that could be improved. For instance, you might tie a brightly colored scarf on a comfortable chair that encourages mothers to cuddle their infants or place a welcoming sign on the entrance to a classroom hiding place where a preschooler and his father could quietly read together. A colorful ribbon can be tied to a classroom photo display of children and families. A paper handprint can be placed on the director's office door indicating an open-door policy.

Families as Guests in Your Center

Families expect a great deal from programs that care for their children. These expectations are varied and depend on the ages of the children and unique needs of each family. When we adopt a customer service orientation and family-friendly attitude, we appreciate parents' emotional investment and their desire to make good choices for their children.

While individual families may look for unique features in child care programs based on their children, there are some common elements to what most parents want to observe in their child's program. Parents want to know that:

- You were expecting them and planned for their visit.
- You will personalize the visit to meet their needs and the needs of their children.
- You prepared an information packet in advance for their use during and after the visit.
- You will cater to their child's needs.
- They will be made to feel welcome in your center.
- You will show them around and acquaint them with the new environment.
- You welcome their questions and anticipate their concerns.

Making Connections

Few programs encounter great problems equipping their classrooms with the required materials, planning interesting and engaging activities, and ensuring children's health and safety. But as anyone who has visited more than one early childhood program knows, the difference in programs can be seen in the interactions between staff and children, staff and parents, and among staff. Any efforts we can make to deepen our understanding of each other and communicate respect go a long way to improving children's experiences and families' comfort levels.

Directors' and teachers' efforts to connect families with one another are important ways of building a sense of community. *"Mr. Marcus, I'd like you to meet Mrs. Delaney. Her daughter, Paige, is in your son Michael's room with Miss Amy."* When a teacher introduces the visiting parent to another parent in the center, she communicates to families "there are no strangers here."

Family photographs and memorabilia often fill people's homes and speak to the relationships among family members and their shared history. So, too, in high-quality early childhood programs, teachers' photographs are posted outside classroom doors and photographs of children and families adorn the classroom walls. Personalizing children's family photographs with their story dictations is another way to bring home and school together and communicate to families the link between children's experiences in these two areas.

When families enroll in your program, encourage them to share important dates in their families' lives: wedding anniversaries, celebrations of adoptions, birthdays, and other significant events. Ask them about their plans to move to a new house, buy a dog, or take a new job.

Building community in early childhood programs is all about relationships – the relationships we build through commitment and constant attention to children and families. As new families join our programs, we have a unique opportunity to initiate relationships that will support them through the years that their children are with us. Committing to this process and being respectful of families and the choices they make for their children tells parents that their comfort and happiness are our main concern. This is what any guest wants and what every host strives to deliver.

The Director's Link is distributed free of charge to early childhood directors in Illinois. If you have received more than one copy of this newsletter, please share it with a colleague. Address corrections should be directed to:

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Donna Rafanello is a contributing editor for Healthy Child Care America and a former senior research associate for the Center for Early Cl...dhood Leadership. This article previously appeared in its entirety in Child Care Information Exchange. Reprinted with permission.

Planning Ahead

NLU Courses for Directors

Winter Term begins January 14, 2002

On-Campus Courses

ECE593 (2 s.h.)
Seminar: Early Childhood Education

EPS500A (3 s.h.)
Human Development with an Emphasis on Early Childhood

Online Courses

EPS500A (3 s.h.)
Human Development with an Emphasis on Early Childhood

ESR507 (2 s.h.)
Graduate Research: Empirical/Quantitative

FND503 (3 s.h.)
Historical & Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Education

For more information about the Early Childhood Administration degree program contact Doug Clark at dclark@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7711

Professional Development Opportunities

Directors' Technology Training
Winter 2002

Made possible by funding from Illinois Department of Human Services, the goal of Directors' Technology Training is to improve the computer skills of directors and increase their access to management resources through the Internet. Directors will become familiar with a common set of tools and templates to manage their early childhood programs more effectively using Microsoft Office.

Enrollment space for each seven-session course is limited. Priority is given to directors whose programs serve IDHS-funded children. Participants will learn basic fundamentals of computer hardware, operating systems, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation graphics, database management, and the Internet.

Winter 2002 *Northwest suburban Chicago*
January 23, 28, 30, February 4, 6, 11, 13, 2002
9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
National-Louis University, Elgin Campus

Registration Fee: $50 includes all course materials. Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE534) by paying an additional $448. Credit for this course meets the core competencies criterion for the Illinois Director Credential.

Leadership Connections – *Save the Dates!*
May 2-4, 2002

Don't miss out on this highly acclaimed professional development opportunity for early childhood leaders. Three stimulating days of training, exhibits, networking, and fun at the Chicago O'Hare Marriott. You'll meet and learn from national experts in leadership and program management. Check with your local CCR&R about professional development funds available for your participation.

For more information about these training opportunities, contact Eileen Eisenberg at eeisenberg@nl.edu or 800-443-5522, ext. 7703

Take Time Out to Chat with the Experts Online!

The Center for Early Childhood Leadership will host four nationally renowned early childhood experts on its Web site discussion forum Time Out! This is your opportunity to chat with the people who have written the books and helped shape early childhood policy and practice.

Each expert will be the featured guest for a weeklong open discussion on issues of interest to center directors. Check out the Center's Web site **(www.nl.edu/cecl)** for a more detailed schedule and information on how to log on.

Ed Greene
Associate Professor, School of Education
Montclair State University

Online! October 22 – 28

Sue Baldwin
Consultant and trainer, Insights Training and Consulting

Online! November 26 – December 2

Janet Gonzalez-Mena
Author, trainer, and consultant

Online! November 12 – 18

Kay Albrecht
Sr. Partner, Innovations in Early Childhood Education

Online! December 10 – 16

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Director's Profile

Liliam Perez From top volunteer to center director

As director of the Logan Square Boys & Girls Club Head Start site on Chicago's northwest side, Liliam Perez knows first-hand about the needs of families in her community. While children attend the Head Start program 3 hours a day, 4 days a week, the demand for services in the Logan Square neighborhood remains largely unmet. During the past 2 years, the center has operated at full enrollment, a high mark that sets it apart from most other half-day programs in Chicago.

Despite the limited hours available to children for the Head Start experience, Liliam and her team of six teachers have implemented other endeavors that extend well beyond the classroom walls to broaden the impact of the center's outreach in the community. For Liliam and her staff, supporting families is the cornerstone of their mission, and they are uniquely equipped for the challenge as virtually everyone on the program staff are former Logan Head Start parent volunteers. Liliam's journey is especially interesting.

After earning a bachelor's degree in education from the University of San Carlos and teaching for six years, Liliam moved to Chicago from her homeland in Guatemala in 1988. As her children participated in the Logan Head Start program, Liliam's involvement as a parent volunteer also grew. In 1996, she was honored with an award as "Top Parent Volunteer." After earning a second BA degree from Northeastern Illinois University, Liliam joined the Logan Center as a Family Service Worker, and in 1999 she was appointed to her current post as Director.

Liliam cites the influence of welfare reform legislation as a critical factor in changing the way her program serves families. "We strongly believe that we can't make a difference in our community unless we establish a close connection with the whole family," she says. "We empower parents, grandparents, and legal guardians as individuals, assisting them not only in finding jobs, but more importantly, keeping them!"

Parenting education is at the core of the Logan Square program. Reaching out to parents begins the moment that parents and staff are introduced to one another. To ensure a close tie between school and home, a family partnership agreement is drafted at the time of enrollment, to outline expectations for parents and the Head Start team alike. This "up-front" investment pays off. According to Liliam, "the nurturing and education that children receive at school must also be consistently reinforced at home if children are to succeed."

Last March, the center opened a book lending library. In partnership with the *Fast Literacy* program, parents were trained on how to become storytellers. They also learned how to take story dictations from their children. One child's father volunteered as the librarian, and parents agreed to read to their children at home, take story dictations, and together make a book report. The library program was a resounding success, with nearly every family participating. The families read over 75 books, exceeding the center's goal of 60. To celebrate, *Reading Together* awards were presented in June.

Liliam remains focused on improving the quality of her program for children and their families. She has successfully led her staff in attaining NAEYC accreditation. Liliam also continues to invest in her own professional development by seeking a master's degree in early childhood administration. To be sure, the families of Logan Square are being faithfully served.

The Center for
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Please return by November 15

The Director's Link

Published by the Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National-Louis University **Winter 2001**

Directors: You Say Staff Deserve Respect?

Energize your words with action!

By Karen Stephens

In child care, the route to quality is by way of a stable, well-qualified staff. It's also the best predictor of a child care director's mental health! In any group of directors, the mere mention of "staff turnover" brings on a deafening collective moan. It's one of our biggest challenges. As with most complex issues, there will never be one easy solution, but there are a variety of ways to tackle staff turnover. Increased compensation immediately springs to mind. However, as important as monetary remuneration is the instrinsic satisfaction child care staff reap for their efforts.

It's true that an average of 40% of child care professionals leave our field each year, but that also means 60% remain dedicated despite the modest pay and benefits. I suspect a primary factor is the self-satisfaction they experience from their work: they know they make a real difference to children and families.

Over the years our program has tried to come up with tangible ways to help staff feel great in their hearts and minds about the job they're doing. We've tried to show respect for their knowledge and to appreciate their talent. Some strategies have been simple to carry out, others require more effort. Following are 20 of my favorites. I must warn you, some may seen hokey, but they've all been effective in keeping our turnover rate extremely low.

Review these ideas to see which would best apply to your staff. While doing so, I hope they spur your imagination onto even more creative solutions.

1. Post staff photos near the entrance. Include position title, length of service, credentials, and a brief biography.
2. Include staff profiles in program newsletters. Distribute newsletters not only to parents and your board, but to program funders and supporters.
3. Include staff in community meetings whenever possible. Introduce them, with title, to "movers and shakers" in attendence. Recognize staff at appropriate events, such as program dedication ceremonies or other public functions. Nominate deserving staff for awards bestowed by the community or profession.
4. Supply each staff member with a professional business card for networking purposes.
5. Post announcements for parents whenever staff acquire in-service training or renew certficates such as first-aid training.
6. Recommend qualified staff as workshop presenters and training consultants.
7. Send staff's parents clippings of program news coverage. (Yes, I'm serious. No matter your staff's age, they always like to make their parents proud.)
8. Publicly (as well as in evaluations) give staff credit for program improvements. If someone comes up with a creative idea or solution, bask them in the glory!

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9. Organize regular events for "team bonding." Team spirit and commaraderie solidified when we instituted monthly staff dinners. It's a great tradition.

10. Recognize and utilize each staff member's unique talents. I have a teacher with a strong background in physical education. I turn to her for recommendations on new gross motor equipment; she knows I count on her expertise. Another teacher is a wizard with kid's computer programs. She's our leader when purchasing decisions are made. AND she gets a subscription to a newsletter on kid's software so her input can be well informed.

11. Take time to regularly observe in classrooms. At least yearly write up your observations for the room's staff to read within a few days. The speedy feedback is always appreciated. The process is time consuming, but it allows you to document for personnel files as well as to congratulate staff on skillful child guidance or inventive curriculum.

12. Provide one-on-one mentoring when possible. If not, try to find a mentor to fit a staff member's needs. Is a teacher having trouble arranging the classroom environment? Help him or her with new arrangements or ask for another staff member's expertise.

13. Encourage staff's hobbies and interests. Is a teacher into bunnies big time? Go ahead and buy a bunny windsox for her play yard. The kids will learn about wind and she'll appreciate the individualized attention.

14. Solicit staff input on decisions that affect them. For instance, they can identify best times to hold parent-teacher conferences.

15. Ask staff for recommendations of curriculum books to add to the center's resource library. And if you don't have an on-site resource library, create one.

16. Provide staff with as much personal space for organization and planning as possible.

17. Committed caregivers get a lot of enjoyment out of being partners with parents as they nurture children's development. To provide time for the communication the partnership requires, bring in extra staff or volunteers at the beginning and ending of the day. (That's when parents are most likely to be in the classroom.)

18. Bring in a bouquet of wildflowers or a new compact disc to classrooms "just because." Employees and children respond to aesthetics.

19. Involve staff in any changes in their work environment. We recently renovated one of our site's play yard. I can't tell you how many times I volleyed construction ideas between architects and teaching staff. I continually asked if a purposed design would help or hinder our teachers' job performance. And boy did it pay off! Our program ended up with a much better play yard because the people who used it day in and day out provided guidance. And the staff were pleased to be included in making decisions with other professionals. (In truth, they prevented "the committee from making numerous design mistakes!)

20. Reimburse staff for part or all of their professional development activities including membership dues, journal subscriptions, and continued education costs. Be sure to recognize staff each time they complete a course that improves their job skills.

So there you are, 20 ways to value your staff and the life-affirming work they perform. As you put these ideas into practice, you'll put action behind your hopes and dreams for children.

Karen Stephens is Director of the Illinois State University Child Care Center. An expanded version of this article appeared in Child Care Information Exchange, January 1998. This adaptation is reprinted with permission from Child Care Information Exchange, PO Box 9249, Redmond, WA 98073, (800) 221-2864.

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"Leadership is not just something you do, it's something you are. And that's one reason good leaders have such strong magnetism. People are attracted to who they are." John C. Maxwell

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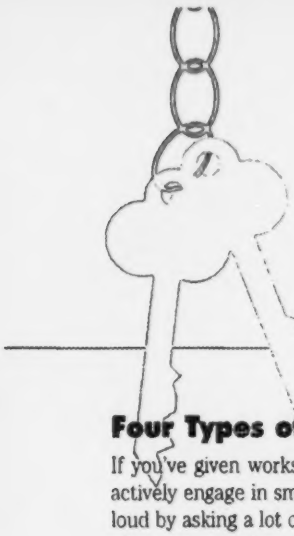

The Director's Toolbox

Tips for Giving Effective Workshops

Workshop presenters need to be concerned not only with what people learn — the nitty-gritty of the workshop content, but also with how people learn — the multiple ways that individuals perceive, process, and organize information. You can maximize the likelihood that participants will give you high marks as a presenter if the learning experiences you plan are based on knowledge about the diverse ways that adults learn.

Four Types of Learners

If you've given workshops before, it'll come as no surprise that participants vary widely in their preferences. Some jump right in and actively engage in small group exercises while others prefer to observe quietly from the sidelines. Some people process information out loud by asking a lot of questions and engaging in lively discussions; others process information in more quiet and reflective ways. If you plan your workshop to address the following four styles, you'll achieve a well-balanced approach in your instructional style.

Practical learners

Practical learners want to see the real-life application of the ideas you present. Their favorite question is, "How can I use this?" They learn through direct experience and want tangible evidence of learning in the form of handouts, products, notes, and recipes. It is important for practical learners to have a sense of where you are going and what you hope to accomplish during your workshop, so a detailed agenda and periodic updates on your progress are essential. They get impatient when other participants ramble or stray from the point. Practical learners strive for perfection, so they may press you for the one right answer, even if there isn't one. These participants work well within time limits, but closure is very important to them. Try to avoid running out of time or cutting off discussion prematurely.

Analytic learners

Analytic learners weigh the pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages, and good and bad of each issue presented in your workshop. They are interested in your credentials as a presenter and want a trainer who is an expert on the subject. They are often verbal participants — the ones tossing out the hard questions and challenging you for your rationale, the logic, or the research backing your statements. Their favorite question is, "How do you know this is true?" They live in the world of abstract ideas, see the big picture, and enjoy analyzing every angle of a situation. Analytic learners are content to sit through lectures as long as they have an opportunity for vigorous debate and discussion following your presentation. Because they come to workshops to hear the expert, they may be impatient with cooperative learning strategies or activities where participants process information in small groups.

Imaginative learners

Imaginative learners are people-people. For them, learning must be personalized. Because they thrive on personal meaning and personal involvement in workshops, it is essential to tend to their emotional, social, and physical needs. Imaginative learners often engage in flights of fantasy, sprinkle their conversation with superlatives, and focus on the big picture with the risk of missing details. Their favorite question is, "Why is this important?" They want to know how they can make a difference. Small group discussions and in-depth sharing with a learning partner are favorite instructional strategies with these participants, but they need a lot of time to reflect and process ideas. Time is a relative concept to imaginative learners, so they may not complete exercises or return from breaks promptly.

Inventive learners

Inventive learners need a lot of mental elbowroom in workshops. They make intuitive leaps and use experimentation as well as insight to come up with new and novel ways to solve problems. If given the flexibility, they'll create innovative spin-offs and contribute creative ideas that will inspire others to take action. Their favorite question is "What if...?" While inventive learners are inquisitive and independent, they can also be impulsive. Don't be discouraged if they don't follow directions exactly; they need room to come up with alternative paradigms.

You can see from reading these four profiles, why a wide repertoire of instructional strategies is essential if you are going to meet the needs of the different learners in your audience. Diversity in your approach is the key.

From: Bloom, P. J. (2000). Workshop Essentials: Planning and Presenting Dynamic Workshops. Lake Forest, IL: New Horizons (847-295-8131).

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Planning Ahead

Chat with the Experts Online!

This is your opportunity to chat with the people who have helped shape early childhood policy and practice.

January 29 - February 4, 2001
Hosted by Gwen Morgan, Founder, Center for Career Development in Early Care and Education,Wheelock College

February 5 - February 11, 2001
Hosted by Diane Trister Dodge, Founder and President, Teaching Strategies, Inc.

February 19 - February 25, 2001
Hosted by Jim Greenman, Senior Vice President for Education and Program Development, Bright Horizons Family Solutions

March 5 - March 11, 2001
Hosted by Roger Neugebauer, Publisher, Child Care Information Exchange

Check out **www.nl.edu/cecl** for a more detailed schedule and information on how to log on.

Professional Development Opportunities

March 3, 2001
Grantswriting Institute

Planning for a Secure Future in a Changing Climate is the theme of the Center's third annual grantswriting institute. Presented by Mary Ellen Bleeden, this institute will address grantswriting as an essential skill and examine the fundraising process as an integral part of an organization's strategic plan. Learn about funding sources, current national and state initiatives, and practical ideas about developing fundraising goals.

Saturday, March 3, 2001
8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

National-Louis University
Center for Early Childhood Leadership
Wheeling Campus Annex

Registration: $75 includes continental breakfast, lunch, and workshop materials

Participants may earn 2 s.h. of graduate credit (ECE-540) by paying an additional $418 and participating in a follow-up grantswriting clinic in April 2001.

May 3 - 5, 2001
Leadership Connections

Leadership Connections is a statewide conference especially designed for early childhood center directors. The conference will feature national experts in leadership and management and provide three stimulating days of skill-building clinics, policy forums, workshops, and seminars. Registration is limited to 300 participants. The registration form is available on the Center's Web site (www.nl.edu/cecl).

May 3 - 5, 2001

Marriott-O'Hare Hotel
Chicago

Registration: $225 for registrations received by March 1st, $295 after March 1st

For more information about these training opportunities, contact Ms. Eileen Eisenberg, Training Coordinator, 800-443-5522, ext. 7703.

National-Louis University First in State to Offer Illinois Director Credential by Entitlement

National-Louis University is the first four-year institution authorized by the Illinois Director Credential Commission to confer the Illinois Director Credential by entitlement. NLU students admitted into the Early Childhood Administration (ECA) program may now work toward attainment of the Level III Credential while fulfilling the requirements for either the Master of Education (M.Ed.) or Certificate of Advanced Studies (C.A.S.) degrees.

The Illinois Director Credential (IDC) is an indicator of high-level professional accomplishment. The Credential recognizes the management and leadership attributes of experienced early childhood program administrators and ensures the professional preparation of aspiring leaders.

After three years of strategic development involving the work of more than 100 early childhood practitioners across the state, the Illinois Director Credential was launched in May 2000 under the governance of the IDC Commission. The Commission is the entity sanctioned exclusively to shape IDC policy and confer the Credential.

The Illinois model is considered the new benchmark among counterpart professional recognition systems in other states. The IDC is earned through validation of comprehensive achievement in general education, specialized study in child development and early learning, management skill, field experience, and professional contribution. NLU students seeking the degree by entitlement will be eligible for the Level III Credential, the highest level of recognition conferred by the IDC Commission.

NLU entitlement candidates must demonstrate a solid academic foundation in early care and education and complete graduate coursework in business management. Level III recognition requires a minimum of five years administrative practitioner experience and validation of at least six exceptional contributions to the profession.

Upon completion of the degree requirements and verification of the IDC coursework, experience, and contributions portfolio, the University will present candidates to the IDC Commission for conferment of the Level III Credential. The Level III Credential is valid for three years. Continued professional development and contributions are a requisite for renewal.

For more information about the Illinois Director Credential by entitlement from NLU, call Doug Clark at 800-443-5522, ext. 7711 or email at dclark@nl.edu.

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The Accreditation Corner

Quality of Work Life for Staff Impacts the Quality of Service Provided for Children and Families

High quality early childhood programs recognize that there is a direct relationship between the quality of work life experienced by the teaching staff and the quality of care and education staff provide for children. Prioritizing staff needs to ensure for their well-being is a critical task for directors, but often the hardest to provide.

Teachers and caregivers who experience high levels of job fulfillment are more likely to express positive feelings toward children. They are also more likely to remain in their positions for a longer period of time. With general operating costs and health insurance increasing faster than tuition income or public subsidies, fringe benefits for staff are generally one of the last budget items to be considered.

Within the NAEYC self-study's Administrator Report there are several criterea relating to the welfare of early childhood teaching, administrative, and support staff. These statements can serve as a guide for directors, owners, and governing boards who seek to improve their own center's policies.

- Benefits packages for full-time staff include paid leave (vacation, sick, and personal) medical insurance, and retirement. Other benefits such as subsidized child care or continued education may be negotiated as unique to the situation. Benefits for part-time staff who are employed at least half-time are available on a prorated basis.
- The program has written personnel policies, including job descriptions; salary scales with increments based on professional qualifications, length of employment and performance; benefits; resignation and termination policies; and grievance procedures.
- The annual program evaluation examines the adequacy of staff compensation, benefits, and rate of staff turnover, and a plan is developed to increase salaries and benefits to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff and continuity of relations.
- Teachers are provided weekly paid planning time away from responsibility for children.
- Staff are provided space and time away from children during the day. When staff work directly with children for more than four hours, they are provided breaks of at least 15 minutes in each four-hour period.

Family Friendly Practices

Before & After School Enrichment, Inc. (BASE)

As a result of exceptional teamwork, there is plenty of good news to celebrate for families in Park Forest, Illinois. Although Before & After School Enrichment, Inc. (BASE) and Matteson Elementary School District 162 operate independently from each other, the two organizations have demonstrated a successful partnership that has truly blossomed over the past eight years of their collaboration. Evidence of thatsuccess is the recent announcement of a 10-classroom expansion project to add space for 300 more students at Illinois School in the Chicago suburb.

BASE Director Marcia Orr played a vital role in developing the funding proposal that awarded over $1.5 million for expansion of the school building, including a $500,000 construction loan from the Illinois Facilities Fund. Additional funds for the $3 million venture will come from District 162 and the Illinois State Board of Education. Much of the new space will be used for infant care, preschool, and kindergarten classrooms, as well as the BASE school-age program. For her contribution to the team's success, Marcia received public thanks from several school district officials including District 162 Superintendent Richard Holm.

Illinois Facilities Fund provides low-cost construction loans, and real estate services to non-profit organizations throughout the state. For more information about IFF, contact Jill Levine at (312) 629-0060.

In addition to leading the school-age program, Marcia coordinates District 162's Parent Resource Center (PRC). PRC provides child care services for infants and preschoolers while parents volunteer their time in older siblings' classrooms. The PRC also offers workshops and educational materials for families, and a Parent Mentor program for information and support to new families in the District. In November, Marcia hosted a "Good Discipline Strategies" parent seminar with nationally know author Dr. Thomas Phelan. Besides the presentation from Dr. Phelan, a light supper and child care service were provided. With 250 parents attending along with 220 of their children, the evening was truly a family-friendly event.

Director's Profile

Kendra Kett Breaking New Ground... Again

As a pre-med student at University of Illinois, Kendra Kett was pursuing her dream to be a physician when a requisite course in child development set her life on a new path. "That course really turned me on to the importance of early childhood," explains the recently appointed Executive Director of the soon-to-open child care facility at Abbott Labs. The company-sponsored program is managed by Bright Horizons Family Solutions, the nation's largest developer of corporate on-site child care centers and Kendra's employer since its merger with Greentree Child Care Services nearly five years ago. The state-of-the-art Abbott center will open in June and serve more than 400 children.

Soon after earning a BA in child development, Kendra returned to the University of Illinois to complete a graduate degree in early childhood education. She taught kindergarten at the University Primary School for gifted children, followed by a teaching role in a State of Illinois at-risk classroom. After moving back to the Chicago area, she served as director of an infant care program before joining Greentree at a pivotal moment in the company's history. As director of the first center established by the Greentree corporate venture with ServiceMaster Industries, Kendra was instrumental in refining the systems and policies that were successfully replicated at over 30 centers in the Chicago area.

Kendra later served as a Regional Manager for Greentree, overseeing the operations of a dozen programs. Under her care, virtually all attained NAEYC accreditation. After the Bright Horizons-Greentree merger in 1997, she was named to head the start-up of the Little Hands Center at Allstate Insurance world headquarters. Kendra remained at Little Hands until her recent move to the Abbott Labs project. At Abbott, she will lead a staff of 90 professionals and manage a 45,000 square-foot facility complete with a children's library, art studio, and staging area for storytelling and dramatic performances.

An accomplished administrator, Kendra derives the greatest sense of fulfillment from the positive relationships she has built with parents and colleagues. "I really enjoy creating smooth and efficient operating systems that can be successfully repeated over and over," she says, "because the more efficient operation frees up more time to focus on great relationships with our families and staff."

Bright Horizons Vice President Linda Oury applauds Kendra's unique ability to carry out the tasks of her job without compromising time to invest deeply in human relationships. "Kendra puts into action all we know about best practices for children and families, client relations, and the nuts-and-bolts management of a center — and she makes it look effortless!"

Since college, Kendra's career has taken her from teacher to administrator, from the rural to the suburban, and from a program that served 20 infants to a multi-site organization that is the largest of its kind. Nonetheless, her fascination with human development is keener than ever. Her passion for nurturing children has evolved into a heartfelt call to mentor early childhood teachers, whether it be investigating new ideas about best practices for the classroom or by shepherding professional staff to new heights. "After all," she says of children and the grown-ups, "we're all lifelong learners."

Grant$ Update

Center For Early Childhood Leadership To Report on Illinois' Professional Development System For Early Childhood Educators

The McCormick Tribune Foundation has awarded funding to the Center for Early Childhood Leadership of National-Louis University to assess the state of the professional development system for early childhood educators in Illinois. This initiative will culminate in a public report entitled *Who's Caring for the Kids?*

For Illinois' early childhood practitioners, many programs and special projects have been instituted to address professional preparation, in-service training, compensation, and public awareness about the importance of a highly trained workforce. This expanding network of support for practitioners is often talked about, built upon and added to, but has never been defined.

Who's Caring for the Kids? will paint the big picture of the early care and learning profession in Illinois. By gathering new data and categorizing existing information, the project will providestructure for the definitions of professional roles, responsibilities, and requirements for child care workers. In addition, the report will describe the impact of Illinois' current professional development system on practitioners, the programs they serve, and the public at large. *Who's Caring for the Kids?* will be released in June 2001.

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